The legend of the crocodile

One day, a young boy took pity on a tired and hungry crocodile and led him to a river to drink. In gratitude for this kindness, the crocodile carried the boy across the sea on his shoulders. When he thought he could swim no further, the crocodile felt his body turn into earth and stone, the size of an island. The boy named it Timor, which means East, and so the nation was founded.

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PRESS RELEASE

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Joint BCET/Parliamentarians for East Timor delegation lobbies for progress on UN supervised talks

A delegation led by Lord Eric Avebury and Ann Clwyd, MP will today press Portuguese Foreign Minister, Jaime Gama for renewed impetus to the UN-supervised dialogue with Indonesia over the disputed status of Indonesian-occupied East Timor.

Mr Gama meets his Indonesian counterpart, Ali Alatas, tomorrow for another round of talks to be chaired by Boutros Boutros Ghali in London.

In a memorandum submitted to both parties, Lord Avebury asked for discussion of substantive issues such as self-determination, since further procrastination would eventually have to be accounted for at the UN.

Lord Avebury also requested inclusion, in the second of a series of UN-hosted intra-East Timorese meetings begun in Austria in June 1995, of representatives of the armed resistance and the clandestine front. The leader of the National Council of Maubere Resistance, Xanana Gusmao, is currently a political prisoner in Jakarta, serving a 20 year sentence. Political questions should also be permitted on the agenda of this gathering, the importance of which should not be downgraded, Lord Avebury argued. The date of the meeting is yet to be fixed, whereas the previous one, much welcomed by the hitherto unconsulted East Timorese community, preceded the ministerial meeting.

The memorandum is critical of the recent decision of the United Nations to set up an office in Jakarta to deal with East Timorese human rights issues. As a measure to remove impunity from the Indonesian armed forces, it calls instead for the positioning of a permanent UN monitoring presence in East Timor.

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